



[Martin Luther King, 1929-1968](#)

## Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The attached “Beyond Vietnam” (download linked below) speech of the late [Rev Martin Luther King Junior](#), is a classic.

Nowadays it has become commonplace to refer to “international solidarity” as if it is both a narrow idea, and also a universal one. But this concept that we have received, and then stripped of its particularity, does actually have a tremendous and specific history whose meaning is not fully conveyed by the mere formula-phrase, “international solidarity”.

The anti-Imperialist struggle and the democratic struggle can and should be one. It is not a matter of charity of the rich to the poor. It is also not solely a matter of good-hearted and exceptional individuals. But there have indeed been such individuals, and there will be again. Martin Luther King was such a person.

What Martin Luther King describes, and justifies, is: “why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church - the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate - leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.”

In other words, MLK at the meeting of the “Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam” in April, 1967, was preaching the intrinsic, organic unity of the struggle of the common people everywhere. It is not an artificial altruism but it is a unity of purpose, in concerted action against the single enemy – monopoly capitalist Imperialism – and it involves personalities, and actual events, and places.

Further than his literal message, there is also the extraordinary power and style of MLK’s oration. In September 1917, just prior to the Great October Russian Revolution that he led, Lenin spoke of “[insurrection as an art](#)”. It is an art that goes beyond the military, and encompasses all of our activities. Therefore when reading such a piece, one should regard them as a source of learning of the art of advocacy, which is part of the art of leadership, and essential to the art of insurrection.

Exactly one year after making this speech, King was gunned down by an assassin in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to show solidarity for [workers who were on strike there](#).

**Picture:** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, at the White House, Washington DC, USA

- The above serves to introduce the original reading-text: [Martin Luther King, Beyond Vietnam, Time to Break Silence, 1967](#).
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